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COVERING BRIEF

DEC 9 1958

Refer to: I-17069/8

TO: The Secretary of Defense

Robert H. Knight
Deputy Assistant Secretary

FROM: The Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs)

Problem: To establish the official DoD position concerning the current Soviet threat to Berlin.

Discussion: On 24 November the Joint Chiefs of Staff developed their recommendations regarding [] (Tab A). The message which they proposed concerning [] was dispatched on 25 November 1958, with State-Defense approval. The remaining recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, however, remain to be acted upon by the Departments of State and Defense if the United States and its Allies are to maintain their military position in Berlin.

Prior to the Soviet note of 27 November proposing that West Berlin be established as a "free city," the question of Berlin was reviewed by a State-Defense ad hoc working group. A copy of its report, dated 26 November 1958, is attached hereto for your information at Tab B. A review of this report at the present time reveals that the proposals therein remain valid, with the exception of the paper entitled "Prospects for Negotiation with the U.S.S.R. regarding Germany," which remains under intensive study by the working group.

Last year, certain policies were developed concerning Allied travel in and through the Soviet Zone of Germany, including travel to and from Berlin. These policies were designed to meet various contingencies which might arise in connection with travel by Allied official civilian and military personnel and their dependents in and through the Soviet Zone. The policies, as agreed to by the three Western Allied powers, provide that should []

1

Conclusions: In light of the foregoing, and the Soviet capability to [] the following steps should be taken without delay:

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a. [

]

b. Adoption by the U.S. of additional measures for incorporation in present contingency plans, as a basis for early discussion with the British, French and West Germans. [

]

[c. Notification to the Soviet Government of our intention
] in order that the Allied position be clearly understood.

The foregoing steps cover the several recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 24 November (Tab A) with the exception of the proposal for a Four Power conference on Germany. This last is primarily a political matter on which alternative proposals are under intensive study by State at the present time.

In order that the Department of Defense views on the Berlin situation may be presented to the Secretary of State, a letter (Tab C) has been prepared for your signature incorporating the foregoing conclusions. This letter has been reviewed by and concurred in by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Tab D).

Implementation: Signature of the proposed letter to State will establish the formal Department of Defense position on the Berlin question. This step is an essential preliminary to the important consultations on Berlin which will be held in Paris next Sunday with the United Kingdom, France and the Federal Republic of Germany.

Recommendation: That you sign the letter to the Secretary of State (Tab C).

Concurrence: Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

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